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SUBJECT: US-NETHERLANDS DRUG DEMAND REDUCTION MEETING

11. Summary. The January 25-26 U.S. - Dutch workshop on demand reduction efforts advanced bilateral cooperation on drug demand reduction and drug abuse prevention. Led by Robert Denniston, the Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy's (ONDCP) National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, the U.S. delegation included representation from ONDCP, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). The Dutch delegation included representation from the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports, the Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development (ZonMw), and the Trimbos Institute (a research center for mental health care, addiction care, and social work). Participants agreed that the bilateral cooperation was producing positive results for sharing scientific and demand reduction information and identified possibilities for future collaboration. Media interviews by Denniston resulted in positive press coverage of the U.S. approach to significantly curbing drug use among youth. End Summary.

Background

12. The July 2005 statement of cooperation signed by ONDCP Director Walters and Dutch Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport Hoogervorst confirmed the U.S. and Dutch commitment to share best practices and joint research into drug addiction and demand reduction. Since then, several meetings and video conferences between U.S. and Dutch researchers have advanced this collaboration. The January 25 and 26 experts' meeting in Amsterdam provided an opportunity for more detailed discussions on drug use monitoring methodologies, anti-drug media campaigns, research between NIDA and ZonMw, and areas for future collaboration on drug demand reduction related efforts.

Meeting Discussions

13. The first day's discussion centered on drug use monitoring and evidence based database systems and interventions. The discussion on monitoring focused on U.S. and Dutch methods of measuring and analyzing drug-related deaths as well as trends and perceived risks of drug use among youth. The work group on evidence-based database systems and interventions presented and discussed three different systems currently in development: the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP,) the Library of Systematic Reviews (LSR) (both SAMHSA projects), as well as Trimbos' Evidence-Based Electronic Library for Drugs and Addiction (EELDA). [Note: NREPP is a database used for identifying and disseminating evidence-based interventions. LSR will present the best evidence from systematic reviews of relevant drug research. EELDA is a website which will provide the most important evidence-based information on drugs and addiction. End Note.] The Trimbos

Institute and ONDCP presented their respective substance abuse related media campaigns on the second day of the meeting. The presented Trimbos campaign focused on underage drinking. Both campaigns utilize television ads and Internet websites as methods of reaching their target populations. The Dutch were very interested in the U.S. experience with such mass media campaigns and advanced research efforts to stay current in the field in order to target youth anti-drug messages.

Agreed Areas for Focus

14. The monitoring methodologies work group agreed to exchange definitions, measurement tools, and research articles. Additionally, the U.S. delegation extended an invitation to the Dutch to consider presenting a 'current situation report' on the drug situation in the Netherlands at NIDA's Community Epidemiology Work Group (CEWG) meeting in June 2007 or January 2008. The evidence-based systems and interventions group agreed to explore possibilities for an exchange of information on programs listed in NREPP which the Dutch consider interesting for implementation in the Netherlands. An exchange on "lessons learned" in the implementation of NREPP and the Library of Systematic Reviews is also under consideration. The U.S. delegation offered to host a visit to enable the Dutch to meet with key organizations in the U.S. Additionally, both sides agreed to discussion of future information exchanges on methodologies used in developing mass media campaigns. In the final session, the participants agreed on several topics for further exploration: an exchange of visiting researchers between NIDA and TRIMBOS; an exchange of senior leaders of service organizations; additional experts' meetings with other interested parties, and a youth-to-youth exchange. The U.S. delegation also offered to host a Fall 2007 E-health workshop to follow-up on previous plans to collaborate on short treatment interventions and the possible development of prevention interventions on the Internet.

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Areas Needing Clarification

15. The Dutch delegation expressed an interest in U.S. assistance with the next steps in EELDA development. In response, the U.S. requested a list of specific proposals from the Dutch for review and consideration. Additionally, the Dutch suggested an exchange of peer review services, but as this would be a resource-heavy endeavor, the U.S. delegation was hesitant to commit to specific activities at this time. Both sides agreed to explore the possibility of linking to each others' systems; this will require review from each side to ensure the other's content is appropriate for such linkage.

Positive Press Coverage

16. Robert Denniston gave two media interviews on USG youth demand reduction programs on January 24. The resulting coverage was very positive. NRC Handelsblad (circ. 229,823), an influential liberal paper and the leading daily in the Netherlands, published a lengthy story entitled, "High People Don't Get Off the Couch," that detailed ONDCP's shift from strong anti-drug messages to campaigns noting the negative social effects of abusing drugs, and the use of advertisements on the internet and MTV to reach younger audiences. The article also noted recent successes detailed in the Monitoring the Future (MTF) study, and included the websites of MTF (www.monitoringthefuture.org) as well as ONDCP's Above the Influence campaign (www.abovetheinfluence.com). NRC republished the article in its morning edition, NRC Next (circ. 65,000), which is targeted toward younger readers. A second story ran in Nederland Dagblad (circ. 32,440), a conservative Christian daily newspaper and focused on Denniston's responses to questions regarding the role of parents, faith-based organizations, and peer influence on youth drug use. The story summarized the reduction in drug use noted in the MTF report, and highlighted the cooperation between ONDCP and the Dutch.

17. Comment. The meetings were successful in paving the way to further cooperation. Immediate next steps include sharing reports, and individual researcher visits to conferences, followed by broader

dialogue between all parties on e-Health. End Comment.

Arnall